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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KPAO](#) [NS](#)

SUBJECT: Revised Request for DVC Speakers during Black History Month 2009

REF: a) STATE 112714  
b) PARAMARIBO 140  
c) PARAMARIBO 132  
d) PARAMARIBO 117

11. (U) SUMMARY: Post seeks a digital video conference speaker for two digital video conferences during Black History Month 2009. Post programming that takes into account ethnic/cultural themes have drawn comparatively high attendance. Post plans to build on past successes by continuing programming on issues of interest to Surinamers during our Black History Month 2009. End Summary.

12. (U) PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: For our Black History Month 2009 programming, Post requests two Digital Video Conferences. For the first, we request a (DVC) speaker on "American Foreign Policy under an Obama Administration." There are great hopes and expectations in Suriname for the Obama presidency, many based on Surinamers identifying him as an African-American president. Over 1000 people, mostly Surinamers, attended Post's Inauguration Event that was open to the general public on January 20. This DVC would build on this "Obama Mania," while addressing the serious side of Obama's foreign policy.

13. (U) For the second DVC, we request a speaker on "The Significance of the Black Vote in American Politics," who will address both this topic and the issue of other demographic voting blocs (Latino, youth, Christian) in the United States as well in order to provide context for the topic. Suriname boasts a multi-racial, multicultural society which is approximately 27 percent Hindustani, 18 percent Creole, 15 percent Javanese, 15 percent Maroon (descendants of escaped slaves), 12.5 percent mixed, 2.7 percent Amerindian, and 1.8 percent Chinese. Suriname engages largely in ethnic politics, with the current coalition government being composed (mainly) by the National Party of Suriname (mostly Creole), The United Reform Party (mostly Hindustani), and the Pertjaja Luhur Party (mostly Javanese).

14. (U) TIME FRAME: Preferably during the first or second week of February, but other times can be discussed based on the availability of the speaker. Paramaribo is two hours ahead of EST.

15. (U) PROGRAM PURPOSE: The digital conference would be one of several Black History Month planned events for February. The purpose of the program would be to build upon past successful programs during Black History Month and Native American Indian Heritage Month 2008. Also planned for Black History Month 2009 is a visit by Cultural Envoy and Jazz Musician Kevin "BUJO" Jones to Suriname, and the screening of the movie "Glory" at the American Corner.

16. (U) In 2008, Post held ten Black History Month events, which reached 1500 people. Extensive and positive media coverage and word of mouth created a momentum during 2008 events that Post plans to carry over into our 2009 programming.

¶7. (U) MSP Strategic Goal: Goal #1, Mutual US/Suriname appreciation and respect contributing to a more effective partnership.

¶8. (U) AUDIENCE: a) Invitees to the DVC on Obama's Foreign Policy would include government officials, historians, politicians, university students, and other Embassy contacts. b) Invitees to the DVC on the Black Vote would include representatives of various political parties and other key contacts, and would be open to university students. The Anton de Kom University's Democracy Unit provides monthly trainings and capacity building to Surinamese political parties, and Post would coordinate with the Democracy Unit in formulating our invitation list. The DVC facility can accommodate approximately 60 attendees

¶9. (U) PROPOSED TOPICS AND NATURE OF EVENTS: Post requests two DVCs, one on "American Foreign Policy under an Obama Administration" and one on "The Significance of the Black Vote in American Politics," which would also provide context by covering other demographic blocs.

¶10. (U) NAME OF DESIRED SPECIALIST: Dr. Max Hilaire, Chair of the Department of Political Science, Morgan State University, or other appropriate speaker/s.

¶11. (U) LANGUAGE: English

¶12. (U) POST CONTACT INFORMATION: Geneve Menscher, P/E Chief, tel: (597) 472 900 extension 2205, fax: (597) 420 800, email: menscherge@state.gov. Back-up program officer: Jessica Martinez, tel: (597) 472 900 extension 2242, fax: (597) 420-800; email: martinezjx@state.gov.

¶13. (U) FUNDING SPECIFICS: Post would be willing to use I-Bucks in support of this program.

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